

ON MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.*

If we consider the inscription of monuments—we shall find that they were most profuse in times *primæval*, and those arrow-shaped lapidary writings of Persia, with which whole faces of rocks, if we may say so, are covered; the stupendous row of Assyrian monumental inscriptions; the hieroglyphics of Egypt, in fine, bear testimony to the amount of thought and adoration which must have pervaded the builders of these eternal and sublime structures. As far as we may already conjecture from the interpretation of Egyptian inscriptions deciphered by Champollion, Rosellini, &c., they contain concise and fervent imprecations and prayers to Ammon-Ré, Osiris, and others of their divinities; showing again and again, that sublimity, and flippancy, and buffoonery never can go together. The oldest Grecian inscriptions have been lost, and one of the oldest recorded may be that engraved at Thermopylæ in memory of the defenders of their country, thus pithily given in Latin:—

"Siste viator—heros calcas."

Stop, traveller—thou treadest on heroes' ashes.

Several, especially German travellers, have made it of late their particular business to collect and publish inscriptions in Greece, Asia Minor, &c., to whose works we must refer those especially interested in this matter.

The chief requisites of monumental inscription are brevity, condensation of thought and ideas, extreme correctness of language, and—if such can be combined—a certain point, or spirited winking up of the sentence or sentences. The greatest men of modern times have not disdained to devote their talent to these brief-though-they-be compositions; amongst others, Ales. Manzoni, whose inscription on the tomb of the unfortunate Countess Confalonieri (wife of the Milan exile) is generally known. Frederick the Great and Joseph II. were the composers of the inscriptions of some of the monuments they erected for the benefit of the public, for instance, that on the Royal Library at Berlin:—

"Fredericus Apollini et Musæ."

Frederic to Apollo and the Muses.

Very original are those of Emperor Joseph—that on the first public park established at Vienna:—

"To all men dedicated, recreation-place—by their esteem."

Another requisite of a monumental inscription is, that it should be *didactic*, and inculcating some principle or moral rule. Thus the hieroglyphics of Egypt can be called open and patent prayer-books, embellished and emblazoned, as it were, in the most stupendous and gorgeous manner. They were read and understood.

But in the lands of the East customs and manners remain perennial. And thus the Mahomedan religion has copied from the men of old this praiseworthy habit—and their mosques and minarets are covered with admonitory and consoling inscriptions from their holy writ. We will not venture to draw a parallel of popular happiness and contentment between those nations and us Western people as we are now. But, strange to say, that nation which was hitherto considered the most sturdy and contented amongst us—we mean the Swiss—have preserved the custom of domestic inscriptions, with which (transitory observation we shall conclude our remarks. Even so far back as the liberation wars against Austria, some of their then chiefs were known for the multiplicity of inscriptions with which they ornamented their houses. This has continued up to the present time, the Swiss peasant and burgess priding himself on the didactic or pithy inscriptions with which his dwelling is adorned. There can be no doubt, that the repeated reading and pondering of wise sayings will beneficially impress the mind. And thus every lover of his kind must wish that, in future, our public monuments, our private dwellings, would receive the appropriate and capacious ornamentation of suitable inscriptions—serious, pithy, concise, *inspiring*. Goethe, whom it seems, no radius of literary or civic life ever escaped, has had a similar idea, that monuments are, properly speaking, not so much intended for the

departed, whom nothing terrestrial will probably ever touch or benefit, than for the improvement of the living and existing. He says:—

"*Sech—nielt Ihnen errichtete ihr monumente.*"
To you—not others, monuments are erected.

AVERAGE COST OF GAS.

As a sort of average locality, in which neither the advantages of the pit-mouth, as at Wakefield, nor the disadvantages of a more distant coal market, as in the metropolis, might be thought or alleged to interfere with a right result, we applied to a private establishment not far from Leicester, and obtained from it a note of the particulars of the cost of gas manufactured there on the premises, and including every outlay in its production and management. The following is the note referred to, verbatim et figuratim, with the exception of the name in the title:—

Expenses of Gas consumed of ———, May 15, 1815, to May 19, 1816.

DEBITOR.		
To coals at 11s. 6d. and 10s. per ton	.....	£184 3 6
Half expense for man and boy (other half to steam-engine)	.....	40 6 0
New retorts and wear and tear	.....	20 0 0
Total	.....	£244 9 6

CREDITOR.		
By sale of coke	.....	£47 11 3
Cost of gas for year	.....	156 18 3
Total	.....	£204 9 6

Weekly consumption—		
28 weeks, average	.....	50,000 cubic feet.
Cost, 2s. per	.....	1,000 "

Now, it must be here remarked, that in place of a moderate per centage of interest on the original or other outlay for gas-house and apparatus, we have a sum of £44, which would constitute such a per centage on a comparatively enormous amount of sunk capital—doubtless far more than the sum so expended. We have also to add, that no return is made on any thing but coke, ammoniac, gas tar, and other products, such as those of purification, breeze, &c., and the lime or other material used, being regarded as so much waste. And, finally, we must consider, that here we have, under all these positive disadvantages, which, after all, render this return a very high one—much above a fair average one of the kind alluded to—an article, nevertheless, produced, on a small scale, at 2s., including all necessary and contingent expenses; while, in the same vicinity, at the same period, the same article was selling, on a large scale, at more than 7s. 1 We shall have something more, too, to say on this particular subject ere long.

WE ARE UP AND STIRRING.

THE Bishop of London, by his letter to his clergy, calling on them to promote habits of cleanliness among their parishioners, as the cholera is approaching, has done much good. One might almost say, would that the cholera were always "approaching;" but never amongst us.—Sir George Grey has issued his mandate for the inspection of the metropolitan parish and union work-houses, with reference to the special arrangements necessary, in the event of cholera reaching the metropolis. The choice of inspectors being left to the Poor-law Commissioners, they have appointed Dr. Arthur Farre, Professor of King's College Hospital, and Mr. Joseph Toynbee, surgeon, and Fellow of the Royal Society.—As a sanitary measure, also, it is satisfactory to us to see that the seedling in the stigma "Light and Health-tax," planted by ourselves upon the obnoxious window-duty, has begun to germinate in the form of meetings for the establishment of something like the association suggested in THE BUILDER, the first of which meetings took place on the 23rd ult., in the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, for the appointment of a committee, and for co-operation with the other metropolitan parishes. As remarked by Mr. Labram at that meeting, while assuring the meeting that old members of committee "would go to work with redoubled energy, and no doubt with ultimate success," this question "has now formed itself into quite a different feature,

being considered one of the first ingredients in promoting the sanitary condition of the poor of this metropolis." A committee was appointed to co-operate with other parishes in obtaining the abolition of this tax.

Our provincial news of progress is still from the northward and westward. At Norwich, we find the *Chronicle*, in a comprehensive article, pointing out what has been done, and what has not been done, the latter plus however, and the former minus. The detail is most instructive of the identity of circumstances, which are being developed in so many different cities, towns, and villages—an identity as complete, in fact, as human nature everywhere is with itself—all differences between black races and white notwithstanding. The same detail of stagnant pools, insupportable effluvia, undrained streets and houses, scarcity of cleansing water, close and crowded, dark and filthy lanes and alleys, might be stereotyped, with proper names of cities and of citizens in blank reserve, and stand for the state of hundreds of other noxious and lamentable abodes of human congregation.—A new arrangement of sewerage is about to be made at Lynn, where Mr. Utting, surveyor, is now engaged in taking the levels of the drains.—At Doncaster, the Sanitary Committee appointed by the town council, are employing the police to fish out nuisances, when notice to the proprietor of the nuisance is issued, giving a certain brief time to abate it, failing which, he is instantly brought up for it, and made to pay the penalty of disobedience, and of disregard or contempt for the health and comfort of the community.

A lustrative paradise is pictured forth by Douglas Jerrold, who vaticinates in a most hopeful strain of—how the cholera will be prepared for by the Parliament, the corporation, the parochial authorities, the clergy, and the people at large, from all of which it appears,—if Jerrold be a true prophet, as he evidently is a good one whose good wishes are so "borne in upon him" as to become "the father" to such prophecies,—that all of a sudden every one will be enlightened with the true light of intelligence on this most vital, yet most deadly subject, and that all its power and all its horror will vanish in the twinkling of an eye.

At Ware, in Hertfordshire, an intelligent committee have been investigating the sanitary state of the town, and have recently made a report, to which we shall refer next week.

BALANCE GIRDERS.

Sir,—Permit me, in explanation of the properties of the balance and girder, mentioned a few weeks ago, to add, that the balance contains four times more sectional area of base, and three times less leverage at the centre of power, than an ordinary girder of the same length and weight, and that at this point it is supported upon a fulcrum; whilst, on the contrary, the centre of power of the girder is the centre of a bridge, without a fulcrum there to support it, and the increased leverage and reduction of power of a girder, at this point always quadruple, as its length and weight are doubled. In relation to the arch for bridges, whether it be of the catenary, the ellipse, or of any other form, the centre of power is the key-stone without a fulcrum to support it, and, like the girder, its power is directly as the depth and inversely as its length. In short, the arch and the balance are as unlike each other in every respect as the circle and the plane, and so is the effect of transit loads upon them; nor does the arch afford the capabilities of the balance for bridges; such as levelness of road, freedom for navigation, extent of span, &c.

The most simple way of testing the power of the balance girder is, by supporting a balance at the centre, the ordinary scale-beam, for instance, and it will bear, in a horizontal position, a load to the full extent of its power; and two scale-beams in length, united at the centre and their extremities, resting upon two abutments, constitute a girder; but it would require their weight of additional material to make it of uniform dimensions as a girder; but even then, how insignificant would be its power in comparison with that of a balance of the same weight and length.

A LOVER OF MECHANICS.

* (From the "Ausland.")